



Testimony of Eric Brown
Before the
ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
February 21, 2019

**SB-6242, An Act Prohibiting Surcharges from Being Levied on Utility Customers to
Subsidize Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Capacity.**

CBIA opposes this bill

Good morning. My name is Eric Brown and I serve as vice president for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents thousands of businesses, large and small, throughout the state of Connecticut with the majority of our members having fewer than 25 employees.

CBIA appreciates this opportunity to share its perspective on what we see as the unintended consequences if this bill were to become law.

As members of this committee are aware, in addition to paying for transmission, distribution and fuel, ratepayers are required to pay for other energy related policy costs such as fees and penalties associated with meeting our state's renewable portfolio standards, compliance with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and funding the energy efficiency and clean energy programs administered through the Conservation and Load Management Fund. Each of these add to the overall cost of energy in Connecticut relative to other states.¹

One of the most significant factors contributing to Connecticut having close to the highest energy costs in the country is our inability to obtain sufficient supplies of natural gas – especially during the winter months, to meet the demand of the region's natural gas-fired power plants – which provide over 50% of the region's electricity. When this demand can not be met, more expensive and less environmentally friendly energy must be generated – hurting ratepayers, the economy and the environment.

Connecticut and New England will be highly dependent on natural gas for decades to come. Expanding our access to plentiful, nearby quantities of natural gas would yield economic and environmental benefits for our state and our ratepayers. It is disconcerting to us that the state continues to make Connecticut a higher energy cost state to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals, while at the same time considering legislation that would eliminate a significant opportunity to make Connecticut a more competitive, less expensive and cleaner energy state.

CBIA appreciates your consideration of our comments. We respectfully urge your rejection of HB-6242.

¹ The programs operated under the Conservation and Load Management Fund do reduce individual energy bills for those who utilize them.